

Health Care Reform Americans are struggling with a broken health care system. Health care costs are soaring out of control - premiums have doubled in nine years, growing three times faster than wages. Even some people who have health insurance find themselves unable to afford rising medical expenses. In addition, nearly 20 percent of the U.S. population has no health insurance. The cost of care for the uninsured gets passed on to all of us – the average American family is currently paying an extra \$1,100 every year in premiums to support this broken system with 46 million uninsured Americans. This is a national crisis that threatens not only the health of millions of Americans, but our economic health as well.

We need a uniquely American solution to build on what works and fix what's broken. Congress is working to pass comprehensive health care reform legislation in the upcoming months. My support for any reform legislation will depend on its commitment to the following principles:

Preserving and Expanding Choices I believe that Americans must have the freedom to choose an insurance plan that works best for them and their family. If you are happy with your current plan and your doctor, you should be able to keep them. I

will NOT support any plan that lets the government tell you can't see the doctor of your choice.

You should be able to easily access information about other choices. I am a cosponsor of H.R. 2427, the Informed Consumer Choices in Health Care Act, which would provide data to consumers about plan information and would create a "Coverage Facts" label for health care plans, which would be similar to the nutrition label on packaged food. I also support providing an alternative to private health insurance to increase patient choice and keep costs down.

Improving Quality of Care We can boost the quality of our health care by expanding our health information technology and electronic record keeping. Health care information technology will help strengthen the quality of health care and reduce the roughly 7,000 preventable deaths that occur every year from illegible prescriptions and bad drug interactions.

We must also ensure that every family has access to a family doctor who understands their patients' unique health care needs. I am a cosponsor of H.R. 2350, the Preserving Patient Access to Primary Care Act, which would address the critical shortage of primary care providers in America.

In addition, we should reform our payment system so that doctors are paid for keeping their patients healthy, and not just for treating them after they have already become sick.

Reducing Costs for Families, Small Businesses, and Taxpayers Between 2000 and 2007, health insurance premiums for New York working families skyrocketed by 81 percent. Even those who can afford the staggering costs of health insurance are not without worry; too often, insurance does not fully cover the costs of an accident or major illness. We can reduce costs for individuals by increasing competition and by giving Americans more information about the insurance options available to them.

Health insurance costs are also crippling small businesses. Since 2000, insurance costs for

small businesses have increased by 129 percent. More and more business are drastically reducing the quality of coverage they provide for their employees, or are forced to drop health insurance entirely. This is bad for small business owners and bad for employees. I am a cosponsor of H.R. 2360, the Small Business Health Options Program Act, which would make health insurance more available and affordable for small businesses and their employees.

Our country now spends more than 2.5 trillion dollars on health care, which is more than 17 percent of our gross domestic product. Taxpayers cannot continue to support an inefficient system. We can work to bring down the overall costs of medical care by increasing competition and by providing greater access to health insurance to prevent abuse.

Myths Vs. Facts. With myths and falsehoods being spread to prevent action on meaningful health reform, Congressman Hall has released a myths vs. facts sheet to clarify any questions related to HR 3200, America's Affordable Health Choices Act. [Click here](#) to view this document.